



Southeast Fishery Bulletin

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Final Rule Implements Reef Fish Amendment 22 Establishing Red Snapper Biological Reference Points, Stock Rebuilding Plan, and Reef Fish Reporting Requirements *Small Entity Compliance Guide*

NOAA's National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) has published a final rule in the *Federal Register* implementing the approved regulatory actions in Amendment 22 to the Fishery Management Plan for the Reef Fish Resources of the Gulf of Mexico. The intended effect of this final rule is to end overfishing and rebuild the red snapper resource. The final rule is effective July 5, 2005.

The final rule will provide the regulatory authority for NMFS to establish an observer program for the reef fish fishery, with implementation being contingent on sufficient funding. Permitted reef fish vessels chosen to carry observers would be randomly selected and vessel owners would only be responsible for costs associated with food and accommodations while at sea. Additionally, consistent with the requirements of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act, Amendment 22 will establish biological reference points and stock status criteria for red snapper, establish a rebuilding plan for the overfished red snapper stock, and enhance the Marine Recreational Fisheries Statistics Survey through the inclusion of headboats in the survey.

NMFS prepared a Regulatory Impact Review (RIR) and a Final Regulatory Flexibility Analysis (FRFA) that augments the findings of Amendment 22's RIR. The FRFA is available from the Sustainable Fisheries Division, NMFS Southeast Regional Office, 263 13th Avenue South, St. Petersburg, Florida 33701.

Written copies of the final rule may be obtained from the NMFS Southeast Regional Office, 263 13th Avenue South, St. Petersburg, Florida 33701. Electronic copies of the final rule may be obtained from the *Federal Register* website at <http://www.gpoaccess.gov/fr/index.html>.

This Small Entity Compliance Guide complies with section 212 of the Small Business Regulatory Enforcement Fairness Act of 1996. Any discrepancies between this document and the rule as published in the *Federal Register* will be resolved in favor of the *Federal Register*.

NMFS is dedicated to protecting and preserving the nation's living marine resources and their habitats through scientific research, management, and enforcement. NMFS provides effective stewardship of these resources for the benefit of the nation, supporting coastal communities that depend upon them, and helping to provide safe and healthy seafood to consumers and recreational opportunities for the American public.

NOAA is dedicated to enhancing economic security and national safety through the prediction and research of weather and climate-related events and providing environmental stewardship of our nation's coastal and marine resources.

This and other news releases are available on the Southeast Regional Office homepage at <http://sero.nmfs.noaa.gov/>. NMFS is an agency of the Department of Commerce.